

OUTCOME
GOAL 1.3 –
PROVIDE
INFORMATION
AND TOOLS
ABOUT WORK

OVERVIEW

During the 1930s, millions of Americans searched for employment. As they crossed paths, information was exchanged as to where work was available; however, the information was usually inaccurate. Many individuals arrived at prospective job sites to find little or no work. In response to a nationwide call to the government to help the 15 million unemployed find paying jobs, Congress passed the Wagner-Peyser Act in 1933. The Act established the U. S. Employment Service and set up a nationwide system of public employment offices. Over the years, the Employment Service has evolved from a simple labor exchange to an extensive delivery service for job information.

SERVING THE PUBLIC

Today, the U.S. Employment Service of the Department of Labor provides labor exchange services such as job search workshops, recruitment and placement services, and labor market information to assist employers in filling vacancies with qualified workers and to assist job seekers in finding appropriate work. State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) perform the labor exchange function by providing three tiers of labor exchange services to both employers and job seekers: self-services; facilitated self-help services, such as how to use job search technology; and staff-assisted services, such as job counseling and job referral.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) amended the Wagner-Peyser Act to require that labor exchange services be provided as part of One-Stop delivery systems. One-Stops offer a wide array of job training, education, and employment services at a single neighborhood location. By FY 1999, more than 1,100 SESA local offices were operating in One-Stop centers.

America's Job Bank (AJB), an electronic labor exchange service, is designed to help employers and job seekers find each other via the Internet. As one of the Employment Service's most recognized national products, AJB provides employers with the widest available distribution for their job openings, and job seekers with the largest pool of active job opportunities available anywhere in the world (approximately 1.2 million to 1.4 million each day). The numbers of both AJB-registered employers and active resumes in the system are increasing steadily each day. In addition, customers may now access labor market information through America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS).

DOL CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The enactment of the WIA brings unique challenges for the future of the Employment Service. First is the integration of labor exchange services into the One-Stop career centers as part of the WIA's vision of universal access to workforce investment services. Second is the incorporation of this new workforce development system with the variety of electronic career services that are part of America's Career Kit. Finally, the Department will be developing new ways to represent the outcomes and value to the country of the nation's labor exchange activities.

INCREASE EMPLOYMENT RATES OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICE CLIENTELE

Goal 1.3A: Increase the percentage of job seekers registered with the employment service who enter employment by 1 percent.

Results: In Program Year 1998, the latest period for which data are available, the Employment Service increased the percentage of job seekers who entered employment (Entered Employment Rate – EER) by 0.45 percent.

In the tight labor market of the past several years, the number of applicants has been declining. However, the Employment Service has been able to increase the EER of the job seekers it served during that period.

Program Description: The Employment Service matches individuals seeking employment with employers seeking workers. Each year more than 17 million applicants register with the Employment Service. The EER was established as a measure of performance to assess the effectiveness of the Employment Service in assisting job seekers to find employment.

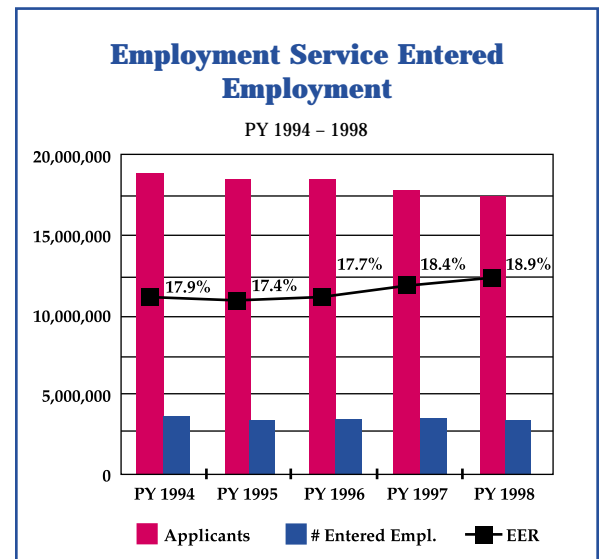
Goal Assessment and Future Plans: Labor exchange services are universally available to all job seekers to the extent that funds are available. While the strong U.S. economy during the past several years has provided abundant employment opportunities for many of those seeking work, the population of job seekers remaining without work consists of those requiring a higher level of service. Still, a significant proportion of individuals who

register with the Employment Service do not take advantage of the services available to assist them in a successful job search.

The Department requires that employment services be provided as part of One-Stop delivery systems. This will allow for the delivery of employment services in conjunction with other workforce services (e.g., skill-training and work experience) to more completely meet the needs of employers and job seekers.

To assess the impact of offering workforce services to the applicant, DOL is planning to institute new performance measures as part of a new labor exchange performance measurement system. For example, in the FY 2000 Departmental Annual Performance Plan, this performance goal is further refined to address the

entered employment rate of those applicants who receive job services beyond registration (e.g., job counseling, resume writing, etc.). The Employment and Training Administration's recent proposal to require quarterly progress reports from States and other grantees should also enable the Department to conduct more timely assessments of the Employment Service's performance.



Entered Employment Rate (EER) is the number who have entered employment divided by the number of Employment Service applicants.

Audits and Evaluations: In 1999, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a report entitled, *The Public Employment Service in the United States*. In this report, the OECD found that, "If the Public Employment Service is to follow through as the only universal public policy instrument supporting job-seekers, it will need mechanisms to identify and help those most in need of more tailored assistance but who may not self-select for it."

The report further recommended that staff-assisted services continue to be made available to complement self-services.

The Department issued Interim Final Regulations during FY 1999 requiring that in at least one physical center in each workforce investment area, staff-assisted labor exchange services must be made available. This is intended to ensure that staff-assisted services are available to those most in need of them.

Also in 1999, Social Policy Research (SPR) Associates published an evaluation report on Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS). In this report, SPR found the Employment Service to be effective in providing unemployment insurance claimants with job search assistance resulting in shorter periods of benefit receipt, but little evidence that WPRS increased the employment or earnings of referred claimants. Part of this discrepancy may be due to the nature of data collection. See Appendix 3, items 5 and 6 for further information on the Social Policy Research and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) studies.

The Wagner-Peyser Act was amended by WIA to require that reemployment services be provided to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants who are required to participate in reemployment services as a condition for UI benefit receipt. The Department is now in the process of developing a performance measurement system that will have the capacity to measure the performance outcomes of UI claimants who have received reemployment services. This will facilitate better management of the delivery of reemployment services. ■

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS

Goal 1.3B: Increase the number of operational One-Stop Career Centers to 1,000 (40 percent of local Employment Service and JTPA Service Delivery Area (SDA) offices).

Results: As of November 1998, more than 1,100 One-Stop centers had been established by the States.

The Department's voluntary One-Stop Initiative was based on four principles: Universal Service; Customer Choice; Integration of Governance, Programs and Services; and increased Accountability for Results.

Under the Workforce Investment Act, these principles evolved into: Streamlined Services; Empowered Individuals; Universal Access; Increased Accountability; Business-led Boards; State and Local Flexibility; and Improved Youth Programs.

Together, they form the centerpiece of each State's Workforce Investment System.

Program Description: The One-Stop initiative was introduced in 1994 and delivered grants-in-aid to State governments to consolidate DOL programs into one access point for all customers. The One-Stop system offers a wide array of job training, education, and employment services at a single neighborhood location using a customer-friendly system. The grants were awarded with few restrictions; universal access, customer choice, governance and program integration, and increased accountability were the only requirements. These resources also allowed States to introduce or strengthen electronic services for customers.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans:

By the fall of 1998, all States had received an implementation grant. The voluntary One-Stop initiative positioned the Federal-State-local partnership to more effectively undertake its responsibilities under the Workforce Investment Act.

The passage of WIA embodied the original goal of converting Employment Service offices and JTPA service delivery points into full-service One-Stop offices, and also introduced new requirements for partnerships and services. States are now obliged to examine the current delivery system, including the established Centers, to ensure that the legal and regulatory requirements are met, especially the inclusion of the mandatory One-Stop partners. For this reason, the Employment and Training Administration ceased collecting information on the number of operational Centers under the voluntary One-Stop initiative. (The last survey produced an estimate of 1,100 Centers in November 1998.)

The partnership currently faces the task of integrating partner programs and funding streams under both the "bricks and mortar" and "electronic" service delivery strategies.

Under WIA's decentralization, the States and local workforce investment boards will be responsible for establishing the location and number of full-service One-Stop Centers in each local workforce investment area. Approaches to designation and certification of operations for these Centers – as well as the networked participation of other partner and affiliate sites – are now being defined as part of the overall WIA strategic planning process. ■

EXPAND JOB LISTINGS

Goal 1.3C: Increase by 20 percent the total number of job openings listed with the public employment service, including both those listed with State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) and those listed directly with America's Job Bank (AJB) via the Internet.

Results: In Program Year 1998, the last period for which data are available, the number of job openings listed with the Employment Service increased by 16.5 percent over the previous year.

Category	PY 1998	% Increase
SESA job openings	7.3 million	12.2%
AJB job openings	1.2 million	52.8%
Totals	8.5 million	16.5%

Program Description: The Department's Employment Service serves employers by providing labor exchange, recruitment, and technical services. In response to technological advances, the electronic labor exchange is becoming an important part of the system. America's Job Bank is a computerized national job system designed to help employers and job seekers find each other via the Internet. AJB provides employers with the widest pool of active job

opportunities.

Analysis of Results: An indication of how much employers value the services provided by the Employment Service is the number of job openings listed in both the AJB and SESAs.

Each year employers list more than six million job openings with the SESAs and more than one million on AJB. Since its inception, AJB has been experiencing rapid growth and currently is the largest Internet job bank, providing high quality, free job matching services to employers and job seekers.

Goal Assessment and Future Plans: In the current labor market, where there are many available options for filling vacancies, employers have listed an increasing number of their job openings with the public Employment Service. The Employment Service has achieved this success through outreach to employers from the SESAs and through the explosive growth of AJB.

In the Planning Guidance and Instructions for Submission of the Strategic Five-Year Plan for Title I of WIA and the Wagner-Peyser Act, DOL requires States to describe how the needs of employers will be determined and how Wagner-Peyser Act services will be provided to employers. This requirement is intended to emphasize the importance of services provided to employers, as well as those provided to job seekers.

ETA's recent proposal to require quarterly progress reports from States and other grantees should also enable the Department to conduct more timely assessments of the Employment Service's performance. ■

AMERICA'S JOB BANK SATISFIES USERS (www.ajb.org)

America's Job Bank is one of the largest Web-based employment sites. The site has been a huge success, receiving many positive comments. One visitor wrote: "Job categories are nicely prepared. It's easy for any job seeker."